

in the key to the species of *Tectaria* (p. 45) are based on one character hard to make out and another which is inconstant. As the figure testifies, the basal lobes of *T. minima* are as often as not much smaller than the terminal lobe. The key to these species in the Flora of the Southeastern United States is better; a still better one could be made by utilizing characters of root-stock, shape of areolae and indusium. I have dwelt in some detail on this point, a minor one so far as the present work is concerned, because carelessly made and inaccurate keys constitute a serious defect in a good deal of present-day systematic work. The making of a good and practicable key takes time and labor—more, apparently, than many authors are willing to put into it; but it is time well spent. For not only are good keys a vast aid and comfort to the user of them, but their making clarifies, as perhaps nothing else will, the author's own conceptions of species and groups.

I have ventured on so much of criticism, on somewhat technical lines, because it is of rather broad application. If it has assumed too great a prominence, I am sorry. For Dr. Small's little book, dealing from full knowledge with a region of especial interest, has a very real value to the student of plant distribution; and for fern-lovers who go south, it leaves little to be desired. Their only regret will be that he did not extend it to cover the ferns of all Florida.

C. A. WEATHERBY

Billy, the Boy Naturalist*

To those brought up in the city, or worse still in the sophisticated suburbs, the production of a book like this, and the mental vista of its writer back to wholesome outdoor memories is at once a joy and a despair. Few can have such a fragrant memory of youthful pleasures in the simple things of nature, and the loss to our viewpoint, if not in our powers of observation is never quite overcome.

*Murrill, W. A. *Billy, the Boy Naturalist*, the true story of a naturalist's boyhood in Virginia just after the Civil War. Pp. 1-252 + 48 illustrations. W. A. Murrill, Bronxwood Park, N. Y. City. 1918. Price \$1.50.

Little needs to be said about the book itself—it is frankly autobiographical. Most boys will read it with avidity, and quite unknown to themselves, with profit. So much juvenile reading is full of nonsense about animals and plants that a book by a trained naturalist that parents can rely upon is sure to find a field of usefulness.

In the preface the author says that the idea of the book came to him during a short illness when he was confined to his room, and where quiet reflection carried him back to the days of which he has so entertainingly written. Robert Louis Stevenson who knew something about illness, and boys, once wrote that they are naturally cruel and this book may well prove it. It is quite conceivable that once a boy got it in his mind that the book was produced during illness he might, even so, think to himself "I hope the author gets it again!"

N. T.